

CLAIMS

1 1. A system for generating digitized documents for a digital environment
2 comprising:

3 at least one scanner provided with a local operator control unit;

4 a management unit operatively connected to said scanner and including

- 5 - inputting means for receiving, from the digital environment, a request
6 for a digitized document,
7 - warning means for communicating a request for a digitized document
8 to said scanner,
9 - receiving means for receiving from said scanner an acceptance of a
10 request selected via said local operator control unit, and
11 - allocation means whereby, in response to the acceptance, a scan
12 order for generation of the digitized document requested in the
13 selected request is allocated to said scanner which sent the
14 acceptance.

1 2. The system according to claim 1, wherein said receiving means includes:

- 2 - means for receiving from a first scanner an inquiry concerning information
3 regarding a request,
4 - means for offering the requested information, and
5 - means for receiving from the first scanner an acceptance of a request
6 selected with the aid of the local operator control means of the first scanner.

1 3. The system according to claim 1, wherein said management unit is also
2 provided with means for checking whether the requested digitized document is
3 already available in a required digital form in a connected database.

1 4. The system according to claim 1, wherein said allocation means, when
2 allocating the said scan order, prevents other scanners from accepting the request
3 concerned for a digitized document.

1 5. The system according to claim 1, wherein the request for a digitized
2 document also contains a specification of required properties and format of the
3 document.

1 6. The system according to claim 5, wherein said management unit, when
2 allocating the scan order, automatically transmits to the accepting first scanner the
3 specification associated with the relevant request.

1 7. The system according to claim 5, wherein said management unit
2 simultaneously with indicating that a request has been received for a digitized
3 document automatically transmits to applicable scanners the specification
4 associated with the request.

1 8. The system according to claim 6, wherein said scanner is provided with
2 means for automatically adjusting the scanning process to generate the required
3 document in accordance with the specification in the request after allocation of the
4 scan order.

1 9. The system according to claim 1, wherein the request for a digitized
2 document also contains a message to an operator of said scanner.

1 10. The system according to claim 1, wherein the request for a digitized
2 document also contains a precondition for processing.

1 11. The system according to claim 10, wherein the precondition is used by
2 said management unit as a contributory factor in indicating the received requests
3 for a digitized document.

1 12. The system according to claim 1, wherein said scanner is provided with a
2 display and with means for indicating thereon a request for a digitized document.

1 13. The system according to claim 1, wherein said management unit is
2 provided with means for indicating a request for a digitized document in the form of
3 a signal perceptible to an operator.

1 14. The system according to claim 1, wherein said management unit is
2 provided with means for indicating a request for a digitized document only to
3 scanners which are capable of executing a scanning process in accordance with
4 the request.

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1 15. The system according to claim 1, wherein said management unit is
2 provided with means for automatically dividing a first request for a digitized
3 document into a plurality of second requests with different specifications.

1 16. The system according to claim 15, wherein said management unit is
2 provided with means for assembling digitized partial documents generated in
3 response to the second requests, to form a digitized document corresponding to the
4 first request.

1 17. A management unit for managing a system for generating digitized
2 documents having at least one scanner provided with a local operator control unit,
3 comprising:

- 4 - inputting means for receiving, from the digital environment, a request
5 for a digitized document,
- 6 - warning means for communicating a request for a digitized document
7 to the scanner,
- 8 - receiving means for receiving from the scanner an acceptance of a
9 request selected via the local operator control unit, and
- 10 - allocation means whereby, in response to the acceptance, a scan
11 order for generation of the digitized document requested in the
12 selected request is allocated to the scanner which sent the
13 acceptance.

1 18. The management unit according to claim 17, wherein said
2 receiving means includes:

- 3 - means for receiving from a first scanner an inquiry concerning information
4 regarding a request,
- 5 - means for offering the requested information, and
- 6 - means for receiving from the first scanner an acceptance of a request
7 selected with the aid of the local operator control means of the first scanner.

1 19. The management unit according to claim 17, further comprising:

2 means for checking whether the requested digitized document is already
3 available in a required digital form in a connected database.

1 20. The management unit according to claim 17, wherein said allocation
2 means, when allocating the said scan order, prevents other scanners from
3 accepting the request concerned for a digitized document.

1 21. The management unit according to claim 17, further comprising means
2 for indicating a request for a digitized document only to scanners which are capable
3 of executing a scanning process in accordance with the request.

1 22. The management unit according to claim 17, further comprising
2 means for automatically dividing a first request for a digitized document into
3 a plurality of second requests with different specifications.

1 23. The management unit according to claim 22, further comprising:
2 means for assembling digitized partial documents generated in response to
3 the second requests, to form a digitized document corresponding to the first
4 request.

1 24. A method of making digitized documents available to a digital
2 environment, comprising:

- 3 - receiving a request for a digitized document from the digital environment in a
4 central management unit;
5 - automatically indicating from the central management unit to one or more
6 connected scanners that a request for a digitized document has been
7 received;
8 - selecting and accepting the request with the aid of local operator control
9 means of a first scanner;
10 - in response to acceptance of the request, automatically allocating a scan
11 order by the central management unit to the accepting first scanner for
12 generation of the digitized document requested in the request; and
13 - executing the scan order on the first scanner.

1 25. The method according to claim 24, wherein said step of selecting and
2 accepting a request comprises:

- 3 - inquiring, with the aid of the local operator control means of the first scanner,

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27. The method according to claim 24, wherein in allocating the scan order other scanners are prevented from accepting the relevant request for a digitized document.

29. The method according to claim 24, wherein on allocation of the scan order the specification belonging to the associated request is automatically transmitted from the central management unit to the accepting first scanner.

1 30. The method according to claim 24, wherein simultaneously with
2 indicating that the request for a digitized document has been requested the
3 specification belonging to the request is automatically transmitted to applicable
4 scanners.

31. The method according to claim 29, wherein after allocation of a scan order the scanning process for generating the required digitized document on the first scanner is automatically adjusted in accordance with the specification in the request.

1 32. The method according to claim 24, wherein the request for a digitized
2 document also contains a message to an operator of the scanner.

1 33. The method according to claim 24, wherein the request for a digitized
2 document also contains a precondition for processing.

1 34. The method according to claim 33, wherein the precondition is used by
2 the management unit as a contributory factor in indicating the received requests for
3 a digitized document.

1 35. The method according to claim 24, wherein the indication that the
2 request for a digitized document has been received is made in the form of a signal
3 perceptible to an operator.

1 36. The method according to claim 24, wherein the indication that the
2 request for a digitized document has been received is made in the form of a
3 message on a display on the scanner.

1 37. The method according to claim 24, wherein the request for a digitized
2 document is indicated only at scanners which are capable of executing a scanning
3 process in accordance with the request.

1 38. The method according to claim 24, further comprising dividing a first
2 request for a digitized document into a plurality of second requests with different
3 specifications.

1 39. The method according to claim 38, wherein the central management unit
2 assembles digitized part-documents generated in response to the second requests,
3 to form a digitized document corresponding to the first request.